

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 INRE-00

CIAE-00 SSO-00 L-01 PM-03 DODE-00 DHA-02 H-01

SP-02 NEA-07 IO-06 /053 W

-----130915Z 051089 /12

O 130803Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8297

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 5393

LIMDIS

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: RP, PFOR, PPDC, MARR, SHUM

SUBJ: MEETING WITH MARCOS: DELIVERY OF PRESIDENTIAL LETTER

REF: STATE 074683

1. I MET WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS FOR OVER AN HOUR BEGINNING AT NOON APRIL 13 SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM VISIT TO MINDANAO. MARCOS LOOKED TIRED AND, AT OUTSET OF OUR INTERVIEW, WAS LESS THAN HIS USUAL LIVELY SELF. HE SPRUCED UP AS OUR CONVERSATION WENT ON, AND, IN WALKING ME TO THE DOOR AT THE END OF OUR TALK, SEEMED NORMALLY VIGOROUS.

2. AS FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS, I DELIVERED PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER. MARCOS READ IT THROUGH CAREFULLY AND SAID THAT HE HAD RATHER EXPECTED IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE DEFINITION OF THE US-PHILIPPINE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY. INSTEAD, HE INTERPRETED IT AS AN INVITATION TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS DIRECTLY IN A LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER. HE MADE NO RPT NO REFERENCE TO THE PARAGRAPH ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. MARCOS SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE SOME TIME

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BEFORE PREPARING AN ANSWER, AND WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO TALK TO ASST SECRETARY HOLBROOKE AND CODEL WOLF BEFORE HE REPLIES. THERE THEN FOLLOWED SOME DISCUSSION ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR BOTH VISITORS AND ITEMS MARCOS WILL WISH TO RAISE WITH THEM.

4. MARCOS SAID HE FELT DATE FOR REOPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS

ON U.S. MILITARY BASES MIGHT SLIP BEYOND EARLY JUNE TIME FRAME MENTIONED BY ROMUALDEZ TO HOLBROOKE. HE SAID THAT HE ANTICIPATED HIS WORK ON THE MUSLIM PROBLEM WOULD BE LENGTHY AND WOULD PROCEED IN A SERIES OF ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY SEQUENCED.

5. THIS LED NATURALLY INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MUSLIM ISSUE AND THE ANTICIPATED REFERENDUM. MARCOS BEGAN BY DESCRIBING HIS JUST COMPLETED VISIT TO MINDANAO, THE VARIOUS FACTIONS WITHIN THE MNLF AND THE COMPLICATIONS OF DEALING WITH THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES. HE CONTINUES TO EVIDENCE A HEALTHY SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE LIBYANS, AND SEEMS TO REALIZE THE DANGERS OF AFFRONTING THE CONSERVATIVE ARABS (ESPECIALLY THE SAUDIS) BY PLAYING EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE LIBYANS.

6. HE TENDS TO INTERPRET SAUDI EXPRESSIONS OF RESERVE ABOUT HIS CURRENT PLAN AS EVIDENCE OF THEIR DESIRE TO MAINTAIN PRESTIGE BY HAVING THE FINAL ACCORD ON PHILIPPINE MUSLIM PROBLEMS SIGNED IN JIDDA. HE SAYS THAT HE IS ATTEMPTING, THROUGH VARIOUS CHANNELS, TO KEEP THE SAUDIS, THE KUWAITIS AND OTHERS APPEASED. HE BELIEVES THAT NUR MISUARI AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE MNLF ARE WORKING TO FRUSTRATE EVENTUAL APPROVAL OF THE MARCOS-QADHAFI AGREEMENT BY THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. AT VERY LEAST, HE SAID, THE MNLF MAY TRY TO GET THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE TO VOTE TO RESTUDY THE WHOLE ISSUE.

7. I THEN ASKED MARCOS WHETHER HE, INDEED, HAD ANY DIRECT SECRET

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WORD FROM MISUARI THAT HE WOULD BE COMING TO THE PHILIPPINES AND WHETHER HE REALLY ACCEPTED THE MARCOS-QADHAFI AGREEMENT. MARCOS SAID THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT HAVE ANY DIRECT WORD FROM MISUARI. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT AS RECENTLY AS LAST TUESDAY HE HAD TALKED BY PHONE WITH QADHAFI AND HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT MISUARI WOULD GO ALONG WITH THE PROGRAM. HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN, HOWEVER, THAT THE MNLF WAS SPLIT, BOTH IN THE FIELD AND AT THE CENTER. THEREFORE, IT WAS HARD TO PREDICT MISUARI INTENTIONS.

8. MARCOS WAS VAGUE ON WHETHER MISUARI AND ISLAMIC CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVES WERE COMING TO THE PHILIPPINES. HE HOPED THEY WOULD BE HERE "IN FEW DAYS," BUT DOUBTED THEY WOULD ARRIVE BEFORE THE REFERENDUM (APRIL 17). HE WAS NOT SURE WHERE MISUARI PERSONALLY WAS AT THIS TIME, BUT POINTED OUT THAT HIS FAMILY WAS STILL IN TRIPOLI.

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LIMDIS

9. I FINALLY SAID THAT OUR REAL CONCERN WAS WHETHER MARCOS PERSONALLY AND CANDIDLY EXPECTED THE WHOLE EXERCISE TO BREAK DOWN AND A MAJOR MILITARY CONFLICT TO RESUME IN THE SOUTH. I SAID WE HAD RECEIVED SEVERAL REQUESTS FROM PHILIPPINE MILITARY WHICH SEEMED BASED ON THAT PREMISE.

10. MARCOS SAID WITH SOME PRECISION THAT HE PERSONALLY DID NOT RPT NOT EXPECT A MAJOR MILITARY OUTBREAK TO ENSURE IN THE SOUTH. HE KNEW THAT HIS MILITARY OFFICERS AND ENRILE FELT OTHERWISE. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED HE COULD CONTROL THE SITUATION. HE FELT FROM HIS TRP TO MINDANAO, THAT THE CHRISTIANS WERE UNDER CONTROL. AS FAR AS THE MUSLIMS WERE CONCERNED, HE PLANNED TO GIVE THEM "A SERIES OF CONCESSIONS," SINCE THEY SEEMED TO LIKE TO DO BUSINESS IN THE WAY OF THE "ORIENTAL BAZARR." IN ANY EVENT, IF FIGHTING DID RESUME, HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ONLY BY A SMALL FACTION OF THE MNLF AND THAT THE OTHERS COULD BE SATISFIED BY THE ARRANGEMENTS HE WOULD OFFER THEM.

11. MARCOS WENT ON TO ELABORATE ON THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MUSLIMS IN THE SOUTH. HE SAID THAT SOME OF THESE MAY BE ARTIFICIAL AND THAT THERE COULD BE A DELIBERATE MNLF POLICY TO HAVE SOME MUSLIMS RALLY TO THE GOVERNMENT WHILE OTHERS TOOK TO THE HILLS. ON THE

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WHOLE, HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT MOST MUSLIMS WERE TIRED OF

FIGHTING AND COULD BE INDUCED TO LIVE IN PEACE.

12. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT MARCOS REALIZES THE COMPLEXITY OF THE VARIOUS PIECES HE IS DEALING WITH, BOTH WITHIN THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND WITHIN THE PHILIPPINE MUSLIM COMMUNITY. HE APPEARS TO REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT HE CAN MANIPULATE THESE PIECES TO HIS OWN ADVANTAGE.

SULLIVAN

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